

Message Text

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E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PFOR, ABLD, UR, US

SUBJECT: DEPUTY ASSISTANT SECRETARY ARMITAGE'S CONVERSATION WITH SOVEMBASSY MINISTER-COUNSELOR BESSMERTNYKH; CHANCERIES, REDMONT CASE, INDIAN OCEAN

1. DURING MEETING WITH SOVEMBASSY MINISTER-COUNSELOR BESSMERTNYKH, DEPUTY ASSISTANT SECRETARY ARMITAGE RAISED CURRENT PROBLEMS WITH UPDK RE EMBASSY REQUIREMENTS, REDMONT INCIDENT, AND RECENT NOVOYE VREMYA ARTICLE ON INDIAN OCEAN TALKS.

2. ARMITAGE PREFACED REMARKS WITH GENERAL OBSERVATION THAT IN TIMES WHEN VARIOUS PROBLEMS WERE OCCURRING IN US-SOVIET RELATIONS, IT WAS INCUMBENT ON BOTH SIDES TO SEE THAT PROJECTS IN WHICH WE WERE ALREADY INVOLVED BE KEPT ON TRACK AND THAT AS MUCH PROGRESS AS POSSIBLE BE MADE. WE SHOULD

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PARTICULARLY AVOID INCIDENTS AND PROBLEMS AT LOWER LEVELS WHICH BRING ON CYCLES OF ACTIONS AND COUNTER ACTIONS AND SOUR THE ATMOSPHERE OF THE RELATIONSHIP.

3. IN THIS CONTEXT ARMITAGE MENTIONED VARIOUS PROBLEMS EMBASSY IS HAVING ON REQUIREMENTS SET FORTH IN MARCH 26 PROTOCOL ON EMBASSY PROJECTS. HE NOTED THAT WE HAD SIGNED

THE PROTOCOL IN GOOD FAITH AND HAD COOPERATED WITH AND

FACILITATED SOVIET EMBASSY DEALINGS ON CONSTRUCTION OF THEIR APARTMENT COMPLEX HERE. WE EXPECTED SIMILAR TREATMENT IN MOSCOW, BUT NOW WE WERE EXPERIENCING A LACK OF COOPERATION AND A LAGGING EFFORT ON UPDK'S PART TO MEET OUR REQUIREMENTS AS AGREED. ARMITAGE SAID AMBASSADOR TOON WOULD BE TALKING TO KUZNETSOV BUT THAT WE FELT SOVEMBASSY SHOULD UNDERLINE TO MFA IMPORTANCE WE ATTACH TO FULFILLMENT OF EMBASSY REQUIREMENTS AND OUR CONCERN ABOUT CURRENT SITUATIONS. BESSMERTNYKH WAS GIVEN NON-PAPER LISTING PROBLEM AREAS (TEXT BY SEPTEL.)

4. BESSMERTNYKH RESPONDED THAT SOVEMBASSY KNEW THERE WERE SOME PROBLEMS; HE HAD JUST RECEIVED REPORT FROM MOSCOW ON SITUATION. HE SAID THIS WAS NOT DUE TO UNWILLINGNESS OF SOVIET SIDE TO COOPERATE, BUT THAT THERE WERE SOME GENUINE "DIFFICULTIES," WHICH COULD BE IRONED OUT. SOVEMBASSY WOULD STUDY OUR PAPER AND TRANSMIT OUR VIEWS TO MOSCOW.

5. ARMITAGE MENTIONED REDMONT INCIDENT AS EXAMPLE OF PROBLEMS AT LOWER LEVELS WHICH COLORED ATMOSPHERE. HE NOTED THAT EMBASSY HAD PROTESTED TO MFA THAT REDMONT HAD BEEN ROUGHED UP AND THAT MILITIA ON THE SPOT HAD NOT MOVED PROMPTLY TO PREVENT THIS. ARMITAGE SAID WE WERE PARTICULARLY CONCERNED ABOUT TREATMENT OF US JOURNALISTS AFTER CONFIDENTIAL

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TOTH INCIDENT AND IN VIEW OF CONTINUED ATTACKS IN SOVIET PRESS ABOUT ACTIVITIES OF OUR JOURNALISTS. THESE WERE THINGS WHICH COULD USEFULLY BE AVOIDED.

6. BESSMERTNYKH DENIED THAT THERE WAS A SOVIET CAMPAIGN AGAINST US JOURNALISTS AND SAID THAT REDMONT INCIDENT WAS PROBABLY A "LOCAL THING." HE MENTIONED EARLIER CASE OF SOVIET JOURNALIST VITALIY GAN, WHO HAD BEEN DETAINED AND STRIPPED BY VIRGINA POLIC, BUT SAID SOVEMBASSY KNEW INCIDENT WAS NOT INSPIRED BY US GOVERNMENT. HE SUGGESTED WE CONSIDER REDMONT CASE IN SAME WAY. HE SUGGESTED THAT SUCH INCIDENTS NOT BE EXAGGERATED.

7. ARMITAGE SAID WE WERE ALSO CONCERNED ABOUT THE WAY SOVIET PRESS HANDLED INDIAN OCEAN TALKS. DURING WORKING GROUP MEETINGS PRESS HANDLING WAS DISCUSSED AND IT WAS AGREED NOT TO GIVE MEETINGS PROPAGANDISTIC TREATMENT. AFTER RECEIVING MR. WARNEKE'S REPORT, THE PRESIDENT HAD EXPRESSED SATISFACTION WITH THE MEETINGS AND A WHITE HOUSE STATEMENT HAD BEEN ISSUED WHICH NOTED THE SERIOUS, NON-POLEMICAL APPROACH OF BOTH SIDES AND DESCRIBED THE TALKS AS BUSINESSLIKE. FOLLOWING THIS, HOWEVER, A SHARPLY

CRITICAL ARTICLE HAD APPEARED IN NOVOYE VREMYA, WHICH WAS DISTRIBUTED BY TASS WORLD-WIDE. ARMITAGE SAID WE WERE PUZZLED BY THIS BECAUSE IT INDICATED EITHER AN ATTEMPT AT A DELIBERATE AFFRONT OR A GROSS MISREADING OF THE SITUATION. WE NEEDED AN UNPOLEMICAL ATMOSPHERE IN WHICH TO PURSUE IMPORTANT ARMS CONTROL NEGOTIATIONS.

8. BESSMERTNYKH ASSURED ARMITAGE THAT THE ARTICLE WAS NOT A REACTION TO THE WHITE HOUSE STATEMENT. THE OFFICIAL SOVIET ATTITUDE WAS THAT THE TALKS WERE USEFUL AND SERIOUS AND HE ASCRIBED THE ARTICLE AS "JOURNALISTIC INTERPRETATION," WHICH SHOULD NOT BE TAKEN SERIOUSLY. HE SAID WE SHOULD NOT PAY "EXAGGERATED ATTENTION" TO TASS REPORTS. ARMITAGE NOTED THE DIFFERENCE BETWEEN THE NATURE OF THE

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PRESS IN THE TWO COUNTRIES AND POINTED OUT THAT TASS, AS THE OFFICIAL SOVIET NEWS AGENCY, HAD TO DECIDE WHETHER TO DISSEMINATE THE NOVOYE VREMYA ARTICLE. HE SAID IT WAS THIS JUDGMENT WHICH WAS PARTICULARLY BOTHERSOME SINCE IT GAVE THE ARTICLE AN AUTHORITATIVE STATUS. VANCE

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